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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 000789

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NL](#) [GG](#) [EU](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/GEORGIA: STEP ONE, DEPLOY OBSERVERS

REF: A. SECSTATE 97574
[1](#)B. SECSTATE 98030
[1](#)C. THE HAGUE 748
[1](#)D. THE HAGUE 728
[1](#)E. THE HAGUE 684

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons
1.5(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Dutch want to keep the deployment of observers to Georgia on track. S/WCI Ambassador Williamson urged the Dutch to press within the EU for access to affected areas and an open investigation into war crimes, but the Dutch responded cautiously. Post assesses that the Dutch are unlikely to strengthen their rhetoric on Russian in the near term. END SUMMARY.

DUTCH DEPLOYING TO GEORGIA

[1](#)2. (C) The Dutch will contribute to the EU mission in Georgia -- the Dutch cabinet approved the deployment of three military police and nine civilian observers on September 19. Poloff delivered reftel A points to Dutch MFA EU Correspondent Desire Kopmels and Hugo Klijn, Head of the Southeast and Eastern Europe Department. In a briefing for non-EU diplomats, Kopmels reported September 10 that FM Verhagen told the Dutch parliament the Netherlands will contribute "proportionally" to the EU mission to Georgia. Kopmels emphasized that the EU mission needs to be in place by October 1 to avoid giving Russia grounds to delay withdrawal. Concerning the situation on the ground, she agreed that "seeing is believing" when it comes to Russian compliance with the ceasefire agreement.

CAUTION ON RESPONDING TO RUSSIAN CLAIMS

[1](#)3. (C) The Dutch were hesitant to respond strongly to Russian claims against Georgia. S/WCI Ambassador Williamson pressed reftel B points with Klijn, Klijn's deputy Cees Roels, and Peter van der Vliet, chief of the UN Political and Legal affairs during a meeting September 16. Williamson stressed the need for a robust EU mission that is will be able to restore security and investigate alleged crimes throughout Georgia while also reviewing his recent visit to Georgia, including interviews with human rights organizations and other evidence of abuses against the Georgian population in South Ossetia.

[1](#)4. (C) Klijn described a delicate dialogue between the EU and Russia, calling discussions, "step by step." When Ambassador Williamson stressed the importance of looking into abuses throughout Georgia, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the Dutch countered that their first objective is to see the EU observers deploy, to get Russia to withdraw from the security zones. After that, the international

community can address the status of the breakaway regions in Geneva on October 15. Humanitarian concerns are important, but the key issue now is the pragmatic matter of deployment. Klijn noted that German FM Steinmeier proposed an international investigation of the events in Georgia. Williamson stressed that an investigation into the August 7-8 initiation of the conflict was useless if it did not also investigate the aftermath. Klijn responded that he expected little from the Steinmeier initiative because as the lead mediator between Georgia and Russia, the EU is in an awkward position of guaranteeing the non-use of force by Georgia, so it is difficult to press Russia. Klijn agreed to "take on board" ideas for the Steinmeier proposal as the modalities become clear. Roels suggested it might be best for international institutions (such as the ICJ and ICC) to lead the investigation rather than the EU, which faces political constraints. According to Roels, the EU has no ability to investigate the actions of individuals and has strict terms of reference. Klijn listed several other complicating factors in response to the proposed investigation. First, there was a legitimate problem with the translation of the EU-Russia ceasefire agreement that will make it difficult for observers to gain access to the breakaway regions in the near future. Also, the EU "can't do much" to get into the regions. Finally, the coincidence of three events on October 15 -- the Geneva meeting on Georgia, an EU meeting, and the expiration of the UN Georgia mission's mandate -- means there is little time and a diversion of attention to address these issues.

15. (C) COMMENT: The Dutch are on the record condemning Russia's use of "disproportionate" force. At a September 17

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event for diplomats and academics, the Dutch MFA DG for European Cooperation, I.M. de Jong, cited this language as evidence the Netherlands is "extremely critical" of Russia. At the same time, he noted that the Dutch are following a pragmatic approach to "get results" -- "no business as usual" with Russia does not mean "no business." De Jong did not mention that Dutch Trade Secretary Heemskerk will lead a 50-person business delegation to Russia on September 29 to October 3. Post believes stronger condemnation of Russia is unlikely barring strong, public evidence of human rights violations. END COMMENT.
Culbertson